

"The Elms"
(Edward J. Berwind House)
West side of Bellevue Avenue, between
Bellevue Court and Dixon Street
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-344

HABS
RI,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-344

"THE ELMS" (Edward J. Berwind House)

Location: Bellevue Avenue, between Bellevue Court
and Dixon Street.

Present Owner: The Preservation Society of Newport County

Present Occupants: None

Present Use: Museum house

Significance: "The Elms," completed in 1901, is an example of the
European tradition of palaces interpreted in Newport
in the Age of Elegance.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The building is located in Plat 35, Lot 48. The following is an incomplete chain of title from Newport City Clerk's Records for the city of Newport. Reference is to number and volume of the Land Evidence Books, (LEB.--, p.--).

1888 Deed of November 17, 1888, recorded in LEB. 103, p.104.

From: George W. Merritt of New York
To: Edward J. Berwind of New York
For: \$23,000 and a \$50,000 mortgage

"... a certain lot of land with all buildings and improvements... bounded Easterly by Bellevue Avenue, Southerly on Dixon Lane, Westerly by Spring Street, and Northerly partly by land of Edmund Tweedy, partly by land of Ruth Livingston, and partly by land of Sidney S. Swann..."

1890 Deed of November 26, 1890, recorded in LEB. 61, p.173.

From: Ruth Livingston
To: Edward J. Berwind
For: \$25,000.

"... a parcel...on the Southerly side of Bellevue Court... bounded Northerly on the said Bellevue Court, Easterly on land of Sidney S. Swan, Southerly on land of this grantee, and Westerly on land of Edmund Tweedy... 54,4000 square feet of ground with buildings and improvements thereon..."

1891 Deed of March 10, 1891, recorded in LEB. 62, p.109

From: Edward J. Berwind
To: Sidney Turner Swan
For: \$10,000

"... those three parcels... the first of which is bounded Northerly thirteen 1/10 feet by Bellevue Court, Easterly thirty nine 42/100 feet by land of the grantee, Southerly eleven 92/100 feet by land of the grantee and Westerly thirty nine 32/100 feet by secondly described parcel, the second of which is bounded Northerly one hundred and twenty feet by Bellevue Court, Easterly one hundred fifty eight 1/10 feet partly by firstly described parcel and partly by land of the grantee, Southerly one hundred twenty feet by land of the grantor, and Westerly one hundred and fifty eight 1/10 feet by other land of the grantor, the third of which is bounded Northerly seventy five feet by Bellevue Court, Easterly one hundred ten feet by land of the grantor, and Westerly one hundred ten feet by land of Edmund Tweedy... Upon condition that no building shall ever be erected on the secondly described parcel within fifty feet of lands of the grantor."

1899 Deed of February 7, 1899, recorded in LEB. 74, p.455.

From: Elisha Dyer, Jr. and Sidney Turner Dyer, his wife
To: Edward J. Berwind

"... parcel with buildings and improvements... bounded...Northerly, two hundred twenty seven 1/10 feet by Bellevue Court, Easterly, one hundred thirty eight feet by Bellevue Avenue, Southerly two hundred twenty six feet by land of the grantee, and Westerly one hundred fifty eight 1/10 feet by land of said grantee...Also all that certain parcel with buildings and improvements... bounded Northerly, seventy five feet by Bellevue Court, Easterly one hundred ten feet by land of said grantee, Southerly seventy five feet by land of the said grantee, and Westerly one hundred ten feet by Edmund Tweedy..."

1902 Deed of March 26, 1902, recorded in LEB. 79, p.49.

From: Dexter O. Tiffany and Florence Tweedy, executor
and executrix for Edmund Tweedy, deceased
To: Edward J. Berwind
For: \$24,000

"... parcel...with buildings and improvements...bounded... Northerly, four hundred twenty three feet five inches, partly by land of Ida P. Johnson and partly by Bellevue Court, Easterly, one hundred fifty nine feet eight inches, by land of the grantee, Southerly, four hundred nineteen feet six inches, also by land of said grantee, and Westerly, one hundred sixty six feet ten inches, by Spring Street...68,579 square feet of land..."

1906 Deed of April 19, 1906, recorded in LEB. 87, pp.145-146.

From: John S. Tooker and Maud J. Tooker
To: Edward J. Berwind
For: \$23,000

"... parcel... with buildings and improvements... commencing at the Northwesterly corner of Bellevue Court and thence running Northerly one hundred fifteen feet, bounded Westerly by land of Ida P. Johnson, thence running Westerly ten 2/10 feet, bounded Southerly by land of said Ida P. Johnson, thence running Northerly again one hundred thirty nine 7/10 feet, bounded Westerly by land of said Ida P. Johnson, to the Southeasterly corner of land of the heirs or devisees of William Bacon, deceased, thence running Northerly sixty one 45/100 feet, bounded Westerly by the said land of said heirs or devisees of William Bacon, thence running Easterly ninety four 4/10 feet, bounded Northerly by Perry Street, thence Southerly one hundred eleven 7/10 feet, bounded by parcel later described, thence running Easterly seventy one 2/10 feet, bounded Northerly by said parcel thence running Northerly one hundred twelve 4/10 feet, bounded Westerly by said parcel, thence running Easterly one hundred twenty nine 78/100 feet, bounded Northerly by Perry Street, thence running Southerly two hundred forty nine 88/100 feet, bounded Easterly by land of Alfred Smith, deceased, and partly by land of Eliza H. Smith, Trustee, thence running Westerly two hundred twenty three 8/10 feet to the place of beginning bounded Southerly by Bellevue Court..65,345 square feet... the whole of Bellevue Court, subject to restrictions that no barn or stable shall ever be erected thereon within eighty feet of Bellevue Court. Also one undivided half of a parcel with buildings and improvements bounded Northerly fifty seven 3/10 feet by Perry Street, Easterly one hundred twelve 4/10 feet by above described parcel, Southerly seventy one 2/10 feet by above described parcel, Westerly one hundred eleven 7/10 feet by above described parcel, subject to dower of Catherine Butler, widow of Michael Butler, deceased..."

1906 Deed of October 15, 1906, recorded in LEB. 88, p.350.

From: Cornelius Howard and Katherine M. Howard
To: Edward J. Berwind
For: \$1,250

"... one undivided fourth part..." of second parcel described above.

1906 Deed of October 18, 1906, recorded in LEB. 88, p.348.

From: Michael J. Butler
To: Edward J. Berwind
For: \$1, 250

"... one undivided fourth part..." of second parcel described above.

1909 Deed of October 12, 1909, recorded in LEB. 92, p.196.

From: Ida Powel Johnson, John G. Johnson
and Ida Morrel Norris
To: Edward J. Berwind

"... parcel... bounded... beginning at Southwesterly corner of said premises where same joins land now owned by grantee, running Northerly and bounded Westerly by Spring Street to land belonging to the City of Newport one hundred seventy and three tenths feet, thence turning and running Easterly, bounded Northerly by said land of the City of Newport two hundred forty five and eight tenths feet, thence turning and running Northerly bounded Westerly by said land of the City of Newport one hundred twenty eight and one tenth feet, thence turning and running Easterly bounded Northerly by lands of William Bacon, deceased, forty five and fifteen hundredths feet, thence turning and running Southerly bounded Easterly by other lands of Edward J. Berwind one hundred thirty nine and five tenths feet, thence turning and running Easterly bounded Northerly by Grantee's land ten and two tenths feet, thence turning and running Southerly bounded Easterly partly by land of the Grantee and partly by Bellevue Court one hundred fifty one and seven tenths feet, thence turning and running Westerly bounded Southerly by Grantee's land two hundred ninety six and thirty one hundredths feet... to the place of beginning... "

1915 Deed of November 17, 1915, recorded in LEB. 101, p.142.

From: Julian A. Drouin
To: Edward J. Berwind

"... parcel... bounded Northerly by Perry Street, fifty four and eight tenths feet, Easterly on land now or formerly of Helen Beach Tyler sixty one and forty five hundredths feet, Southerly by land now or formerly of Ida P. Johnson forty five and fifteen hundredths feet, and Westerly by land of the City of Newport seventy one and one tenth feet... "same as conveyed by deed to grantor from Mary E. Bacon, widow of William Bacon, February 15, 1902..."

1962 Deed of June 13, 1962, recorded in LEB. 206, pp.553.

From: Edward J. Berwind, trustees
To: Matthew J. Faerber
For: \$105,000

Faerber purchased the entire estate bounded easterly by Bellevue Avenue, northerly by Perry Street, westerly by Spring Street, and southerly by Dixon Avenue. Berwind had purchased all the property within these bounds with the exception of two small lots fronting on Perry Street and the southwest corner of Perry Street and Spring Street belonging to the city of Newport, Lenthal School. In addition he had purchased the northeast corner lot on Bellevue Avenue and Parker Avenue, formerly Dixon Avenue east of Bellevue Avenue. (See LEB. 76, pp.413-14.)

1982 Deed of July 23, 1962, recorded in LEB. 206, pp.556-58.

From: Matthew J. Faerber
To: The Preservation Society of Newport County
From: "...four parcels of land with the buildings and improvements thereon..." These parcels are those described in the above transfers from 1888-1915. Faerber retained possession of properties bounded northerly by Perry Street, easterly by Bellevue Avenue, southerly by Bellevue Court, and westerly by the property first described in the deed of April 19, 1906.

2. Date of erection: 1900-1901
3. Architect: Horace Trumbauer
4. Builder or contractor: Interiors by J. Allard et Fils and Alavoine et Cie., both of Paris
5. Original plans: None known
6. Alterations and additions: The garage and carriage house were built in 1911 on the Ida Powel Johnson estate which Berwind acquired in 1909.
7. Important old views: Photographs of the west facade and formal gardens by Meservey. See Downing, Antoinette, and Scully, Vincent J. Jr., The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, New York: Clarkson N. Potter, second edition, 1967, plate 225.
8. Descriptions:

Newport Herald, August 10, 1901; from Stanhope Scrapbook, O, p.11.

"Yesterday morning, the Elms, the new summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Berwind on Bellevue Avenue which is justly considered by those who have been within its walls to be the handomest private dwelling in America. In minor details the house is still uncompleted, but enough of the place is completed to show the estate to advantage.

'The Elms' to be appreciated must be seen and not less than three hundred ladies were present during the reception at which Mr. and Mrs. Berwind received.

Not only was the interior of special interest to the guests but the magnificent grounds, the landscape gardening being a treat for lovers of plants, trees and flowers. A feature of the lawn that interested many was the velvet like grass in front of the villa.

A description of 'The Elms' follows:

The house is built of white stone in the style of Louis XIV with its central "pavilion" projecting beyond the alignment of the two wings it belongs to the type of "chateaux" built by the great architect Mansart of Versailles fame, for the nobles of the Louis XVI court. The sober and yet graceful architecture of the building, the perfection of the carving, where any has been used, its thorough conformity, illustrates a quality so rarely found in modern buildings i.e., a rich simplicity. The architect is Mr. Horace Trumbauer of Philadelphia.

The boundary wall on Bellevue avenue, in which stone has been happily combined with open iron grille work, form the necessary foreground to the house and figuratively speaking "frame it" in proper architectural surroundings. Two groups of carved stone are to be placed eventually on the balustrade crowning the top of the house above the center pavillion, and will so give the necessary picturesque to the outline of the roof.

To enter the house you walk up a few steps and pass through magnificent grill rooms [sic!] of glass and wrought iron into a hall of unusual proportion forming a gallery the entire length of the house. The walls are of cream white Caen stone with the color effect obtained by the use of breche violette marble pilasters and columns with gilt bronze capitals and bases. On the wall, opposite the entrance, are framed in gilt mouldings two beautiful ancient oil painted panels representing episodes of the history of Catherine Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus; these are two of a set of paintings bought in Venice by Mr. Berwind, and come from the Cornaro palace; they were painted by "Tiepolo" and his pupils for the glorification of the illustrious family of Doges of that name. In this gallery open all doors leading into the principal rooms. The wide door opposite the main entrance opens into a ball room 50 x 45 feet. This room is decorated in the style of Louis XV., and the richly-carved woodwork is soberly painted in cream and white with no gilding at all except the mirror frames. All the details of the ornamentation on the walls and cornice have been worked out in the feeling of the period in its minutest detail. The window curtains are made of a broche silk executed in Lyons after a piece of old silk selected by Mr. Berwind. The richly carved furniture made of unique models and the marble mantel piece of pavonazzo enriched in gilt bronze complete the scheme of this room.

The dining room opening into the ball room through two large double doors is decorated with a series of superb paintings, two of which were used in the hall as described. The woodwork is of light oak, the doors of mahogany all being faithfully reproduced from the original room for which the paintings were originally made. The ceiling is made of coffres of oak richly ornamented with carving. Four crystal chandeliers hang in the four corners and are fitted with specially made lamps to throw the light on the paintings. The mantel piece reaches nearly to the ceiling and is made of Vert antique marble

with panels of agate onyx inserted in it at places and bronze mounted. In the center of the upper portion is a niche with an old Roman bust of "Varacalla" [sic!] in the polychrome marble.

The breakfast room adjoining the dining room is panelled up with light oak with some little gilding and beautiful carving of the style Louis XV. The principal feature of this room consists of four large panels of beautiful Chinese lacquer of the black and gold family. They are believed to be, according to the testimony of the best experts, at least five hundred years old as is shown by the fact that the personages represented do not wear the familiar cue of the later period Chinamen. The panels represent symbolically the history and life of a deified hero.

The silk used for the curtains, the furniture, rug, and in fact all the ornaments in this room are stamped with the feeling of what they call "Les Chinoiserie Louis XV., at a time when extensive commercial intercourse with that country in the last century brought to France a fad for all Chinese ornaments.

The drawing room opening into the ballroom opposite the dining room forms an exact counterpart to it in size and disposition. It is treated in the style of Louis XIV. in the same strain of soberness as the ballroom; there is no gilding on the ornamentation, and the room is entirely painted in grey and white, but the carving on woodwork is of the most perfect kind that can be produced in these times. The two centre panels facing each other on the two opposite walls are the "clou" of the room. One is a barometer and the other a thermometer which have served as a pretext for two decorative motifs; in the first one, the dial is supported by the figure of a young woman surrounded by flying amours scattering the flowers of spring. The other dial is supported by the figure of an aged man surrounded by the attributes of winter. On the ceiling is one of the best canvasses ever painted by De Witt, a celebrated painter of the 18th century. The painting possesses the soft "blonde" color characteristic of the master. It represents a Boreas and Aquilon driven from the skies by the figure of Spring accompanied by Flora, goddess of the flowers, Zephyris under the features of young amours, and other divinities.

The library at the end of the gallery hall is panelled up with a high wainscoting of walnut of the style of Henry II. The dark color of the walnut is relieved by imbrications of lighter wood and above the wainscoting the walls are hung with cramos in brocatelle.

The mantel piece of imposing proportion reaches the ceiling. The lower part of it is in white carved stone and the upper part of richly carved walnut frames, one of Mr. Berwind's art treasures, a beautiful terra cotta bas-relief by Della Robbia.

Near the library is the palm room with the walls entirely of stone. At one end is fountain of red marble with dark bronze figures representing nereide and a triton holding a dolphin spouting water into the lower vasque of white marble. In the four corners are four statues of white marble carved in the latter part of the last century, and represent the four seasons.

The staircase to the second floor to main hall is a magnificent double evolution staircase built entirely of white breche violette and pavonazzetto marble. The walls are of Caen stone with marble pilasters and on two sides are covered by two Gobelon [sic!] de "Hautelice" tapestries representing mythological scenes. The tapestries are of exceptional value both as to quality and design; two others forming part of the same set are hung in the second story hall which reproduces the disposition of the hall downstairs; and it forms a long gallery nearly the entire length of the house where all the bed rooms and apartments open. The walls of the gallery are lined with red silk on which are hung twelve tapestry panels reproducing some famous portraits of the most famous painters. This series of panels is quite unique in this country. They are woven with gold and silver and on some of them the execution is so perfect that they give the illusion of the oil paintings from which they were copied.

All the bed rooms are treated in the Louis XV. and Louis XVI. style. The woodwork has been kept in perfect white, but in each room the character is given by the exquisite choice of the color of the silk hangings selected by Mrs. Berwind. The furniture is of richly carved wood enameled white with the variety of shapes and outlines to be found only in the two styles used. The spacious bath rooms adjoining each bed room are appointed with the luxury and comforts known only in this country.

It might be added that Mr. Berwind has been aiming at excellence in every respect throughout the house, no ornamentation in carton pierre but only carved wood, and no imitation of any kind has been permitted by him even in the less important apartments, and it can be said that in excellence of execution the work cannot be surpassed. Mr. and Mrs. Berwind have superintended every detail and suggested all ideas; they selected themselves the color of the silks, the designs of the furniture, discussed the plans and in fact arranged the details of the entire house."

See also Newport Herald, August 18, 1902; Stanhope Scrapbook P, p.136

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Mr. Berwind, owner of the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company gave many parties during the Newport season. The house-warming was a triumph. Lights of all sizes and shapes were scattered around the grounds. The interior was filled with American Beauty roses, with rose trees and rose vines going from floor to ceiling. Two orchestras played in the ballroom and the Newport Band played in the park.

The novelty of this party was the pet monkeys which the Berwinds hired to play amid the palm trees. See Reed, Henry Hope, The Elms, Newport: The Preservation Society of Newport County, 1968.

Other gala occasions were often reported in the local papers. A dinner dance was held at "The Elms" August 14, 1902. One of the honored guests was Miss Alice Roosevelt, daughter of the President. See Newport Herald, August 14, 1902, Stanhope Scrapbook P, p.136.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Records of Deeds in the Newport City Hall.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Downing, Antoinette F. and Scully, Vincent J., Jr. The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, second edition, 1967.

Newport Herald, July 1, 1901.

Newport Journal, November 24, 1900.

_____, September 7, 1901.

_____, May 17, 1902.

_____, May 16, 1903.

Reed, Henry Hope. The Elms. Newport: The Preservation Society of Newport County, 1968.

Richard's Atlases of the City of Newport, 1893, 1907.
Newport Historical Society.

Stanhope, Clarence. Stanhope Scrapbook. Vol. O. Newport Herald, August 10, 1901, p.11, Newport Historical Society

_____, Stanhope Scrapbook. Vol. P. Newport Herald, May 1, 1902, May 10, 1902, August 14, 1902, Newport Historical Society.

3. Likely sources not yet investigated:

Office records of Horace Trumbauer.
Edward J. Berwind family papers.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: "The Elms", based on the classical architecture of the 18th century in France, more specifically a copy of the Chateau Allière near Paris, is a large, eclectic "summer house" typical of the early 20th century mansions built in Newport.
2. Condition of fabric: As a museum house, the building is carefully maintained. The exterior and interior are in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 120 feet by 60 feet; rectangular, nine bays, 3 stories.
2. Foundations: The exterior walls are granite faced with brick on the interior.
3. Wall construction: The exterior walls are faced with limestone with a first floor coursing of granite.
4. Structural system: The entire structure is framed in steel, with coffered brick arches in the first basement level.
5. Chimneys: No chimney is visible above the blind balustrade which rings the roof line. Eleven low, rectangular chimneys, are located on the third floor roof.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: A three bay central projection on the east facade contains three arched doorways which are reached by a short, low flight of six granite steps. The elaborate wrought iron and glass grillwork doors are framed by rusticated stonework with concave chamfering. Elaborate cartouches of masks done in imitation cut leather work, acanthus leaves, and scallop shells with borders of roses, daisies, and fluttering ribbons are centered over each arch. The center window or French door in the ballroom opens onto the west terrace. Access to the south terrace may be gained through French doors leading from both the library and conservatory. French doors also open onto the north terrace from the breakfast room and butler's pantry. A large, simply treated service entrance is located at the first basement level on the north side of the building.

- b. Windows: All windows on the first story are casement framed in stone and capped by segmental arches with voluted keystones. All second floor casement windows except those in the projecting bay to the west are square headed with mask keystones. The windows in the bay are identical to those on the first story.
7. Roof: A projecting cornice with deeply carved dentils and brackets caps the second story. An eight foot high blind balustrade conceals the third story, the servants quarters. This level is set back four to six feet from the balustrade. This service walk is tarred and gravelled. Slate shingles cover the inside wall of the balustrade and the exterior walls of the third story. Copper sheets are used as roofing of this story. Twelve metal ventilator shafts project through the walk and roof. Eight sculpture groups, installed in 1903, are located on the balustrade at the projecting corners of the bays and of the house proper.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: The center entrance, located in a projecting bay on the east facade, is composed of three recessed doorways which are flanked by four paired Corinthian columns and pilasters. A projecting cornice with brackets and dentils emphasizes this entrance bay. The composition is topped by an open balustrade decorated with four urns at the second story level. A six step, broad flight of granite stairs leading to the entrance is flanked by two marble sphinxes on which are seated bronze winged cherubs. A large wrought iron lantern is placed on each side of this bay. A three level terrace extends to the west of the house. The first level, a curved area with balustrade, is reached through the French doors leading from the ballroom. Two verandas, on the north and south sides of the house, are on the same level. This first level may be reached through the French doors in the respective rooms or by granite steps leading to the second terrace level.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The central entrance foyer is part of the grand stairwell and of the main north-south hall. A straight run of seven steps leads to the hall. On the east facade, to the left of the foyer, is an open area, the south alcove. At the south, the hall terminates in the corner room, the library. To the right of the foyer is another open area, the north alcove. At the north, the hall terminates in a vestibule or coat room, which also serves as an access to a powder room to the east and the service area and stairwell to the north. The three central rooms on the west facade, from north to south, the dining room, the ballroom, and the drawing room open into the main hall. The ballroom entrance is on a direct east-west axis with the center entrance door. The five rooms on the west facade open into one another through large doors placed on a north-south axis wall. On the south, this traffic pattern terminates in the conservatory. From this room

toward the north, paired doors located at both the east and west ends of the east-west walls open to the drawing room. Thus a double traffic pattern running parallel to the main hall is established from the conservatory, through the drawing room, ballroom, and dining room. The western most access terminates in the breakfast room, located at the northwest corner of house. The eastern access terminates in the two-level butler's pantry to the north of the dining room. Although the second floor room arrangement is similar to that of the first floor, the plan is not nearly so open due to the placement of bathrooms and closets or storage area adjoining each of the eight bedrooms and center sitting room. The third floor contains sixteen rooms and three bathrooms arranged to the east and west of a central north-south hall which terminates at doors leading to the roof area. The house contains a full basement. The kitchen and servants' dining and sitting rooms are located in the northwest corner. An entrance and entrance hall extends from the north to the laundry room which is located under the center main hall. The basement extends under the first level of the terrace on the west. The wine cellar is located under the center terrace steps. The area beneath the ballroom contains a cold food storage room, work shop and other storage facilities. The entire southern area of the basement is devoted to mechanical equipment. A sub-basement level contains furnace, boiler, water pumps, and a coal storage area. A tunnel containing railroad tracks extends from the north side of Dixon Street to this sub-basement area. Coal was thus delivered and ashes removed from the furnace area. Other storage areas extend under the first basement level.

2. Stairways: The foyer contains a low, broad straight run of six white marble steps which lead to the main hall. The forty-one foot high, open stair hall contains two white marble straight flights from the first floor hall to a landing. A single marble straight run continues to the second floor stair hall. The curved, black wrought iron and bronze grillwork railings are topped by a molded hand rail. An open service stair well in the northeast corner of the house extends from the first basement to the third floor. The steps are of white marble. The plaster walls have applied white glazed tile wainscoting. A curved, white wrought iron railing is topped by a molded hand rail.
3. Flooring: The flooring in the foyer, main hall, and second floor stair hall is white marble with green borders. The conservatory floor is also of white marble. All other flooring on the first and second floors is parquet laid in herringbone and other patterns. All the bathrooms have hexagonal white glazed tile floors. The third floor servant quarters have narrow oak strip floors. The floor of the central hall of this level contains two large glass tile insets which cover two stained glass panels located in the ceiling of the second floor hall. In the basement the food preparation areas, servants' dining room, and laundry room have white glazed tile floors, walls, and ceiling. The north entrance hall in the basement has a gray terrazzo floor with a black and white mosaic tile border laid in a Greek key design.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Foyer, hall, and alcoves: The plaster ceiling is finished by a cove molding with corner cartouches in imitation cut leather surrounded by fronds and flowers. The center rectangular panels have an oak leaf frame. The walls are Caen limestone with heavy moldings and carved panels set above the doors. The overdoor of the ballroom has a bronze relief of the helmeted Athena with two cherubs seated on the two parts of a broken round pediment. Polished Breccia marble is used to frame the deep doorways and the stair case. Breccia marble pilasters with gilt bronze Ionic capitals and bases are applied to the west wall. Breccia marble columns with gilt bronze Ionic capitals and bases are paired on either side of the entrance steps and in the center of each alcove opening. Single columns are placed on either side of the three symmetrically placed openings on the east wall. On either side of the doorway to the ballroom are large murals of the School of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo depicting episodes in the life of Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus. These were originally in the Palazzo Cornaro, Venice. Three gilt bronze lanterns hang in the center portion of the hall. Eight bronze wall sconces are symmetrically arranged around the hall. Two bronze sconces are placed on either side of the main entrance door. The use of Breccia marble pilasters is continued in the second floor center stair hall.

Library: The walls are covered with red damask above a wainscoting of inlaid walnut. A heavy molded cornice with brackets frames the fabric walls. The white plaster ceiling has a finely worked center rondel. The broken pedimented fireplace is carved of Caen limestone. A carved walnut overmantel contains a terra cotta copy of the Madonna and Child done for the Church of St. Joco po di Ripoli, Florence, by Giovanni della Robbia.

Conservatory: The limestone walls are pierced by two French doors on the north and west walls and three on the south wall. Two doorways on the east wall are filled with mirrors framed in trellis work. At the foot of each mirror is a Rouge Royal marble basin decorated with bronze swags. A matching marble fountain has a bronze triton and nereid seated on dolphins, flanked below by two horses. Four white marble sculptures depicting the four seasons stand on fluted marble pedestals which are placed in the four corners of the room. A nineteenth century Italian ten foot high marble urn is centered on the north wall. The ceiling has a narrow bracketed molding which frames the plaster strapwork.

Drawing Room: The gray and white woodwork and plasterwork is done in an early Louis XVI style. Over the doors are stucco reliefs of musical instruments and agricultural tools. In the middle of the south and north walls are grisaille set in frames bordered by gables. A Breccia marble fireplace with bronze work is set in the center of the east wall. The off-white ceiling is decorated with cartouches, plumed helmets and cherubs in the four corners. The center insert is a painting by Jacob de Wit depicting Boreas and Aquilo being driven from the sky.

Ballroom: This large room, 41 feet by 49 feet, is completely symmetrical with facing double doors on the north and south walls. Each door has a large, elaborate overdoor panel with inset brown and gray painting of scenes from classical myths. A Breccia marble fireplace with a large gilt framed mirror above is set in the center of the north wall. A matching console table is set in a similar composition on the south wall. The large double door from the hall is placed opposite the French doors leading to the first level of the terrace. The remaining wall surfaces are divided into ivory and white painted panels set above a molded wainscoting. The four corners of the room are rounded, the two on the east wall with panelling, the two on the west wall with French doors which are placed on either side of the projecting bay to the west. An elaborate plasterwork cove molding with swags, cherubs, and cartouches frames a plaster ceiling. A large crystal chandelier hangs in the center from a stucco rondel of arabesques, cherubs, and flowers.

Dining room: The Venetian styled dining room is lined with oak paneling finished with gilt moldings. An elaborate, bracketed cornice frames a grained stucco coffered ceiling which has gold relief set against a green field. The three pairs of double doors are cherry, intricately panelled with five geometric divisions per leaf. The nineteen foot high fireplace centered on the east wall contains a niche framed by oak Ionic columns and a broken segmental pediment. The entire composition has insets of agate, onyx, and Verd Antique marble. A red marble fountain centered on the west wall has a statue of Diana supported by bronze dolphins. Two large murals on the north and south walls of the School of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo depict events in the lives of Alexander the Great and of Scipio Africanus. These were originally in the Palazzo Cornaro, Venice.

Breakfast room: This room is panelled in golden oak with gilt moldings. Four large black and gold lacquered Chinese panels of the K'ang Hsi Period are framed in the oak and gilt. Each of the three double doors contains a similarly painted rectangular overdoor. A large fireplace composition is centered on the south wall. It has a mantelpiece of carved white marble decorated with gilt bronze masks and fronds. The overmantel contains a large mirror framed by the wooden paneling. The white plaster ceiling has a cove molding decorated with gilt stucco work. The parquet floor is partially covered by a blue and ecru dragon rug of the Ming Dynasty, part of the original furnishings.

Butler's pantry: Centered on the north wall of the house, this room contains doors to the dining room, breakfast room, service stair well, and north veranda. The first floor level is fitted with a large, marble-topped double sink, an ice box, and an electric dumbwaiter which ran from the kitchen to the second level. A steam cabinet was located in the northeast corner. The second level or china closet has a center opening ringed with a wrought iron railing. It is fitted with glass doored cabinets and a walk-in vault used for silver storage. The walls and ceilings are finished in white glazed tile. The floor is white marble.

Second floor rooms: All bedrooms and hall wings have fabric covered walls, carved and molded woodwork, and plaster ceilings. The decorative detailing throughout is elegant, but not as elaborate as that of the first floor.

Third floor rooms: All rooms have plaster ceilings and walls. All the woodwork and floors are oak. All windows have louvered shutters.

5. Doorways and doors: All doorways and doors are treated as part of the wall compositions.
6. Special decorative features: All the furnishings of the house were sold at auction in 1962. However, those items as noted above and other original pieces were donated to the house by friends of the Preservation Society of Newport County. Other furnishings suitable to the style and period of the house are on loan from the collections of Amherst College, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Fogg Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, the Smithsonian Institution, and individuals.
7. Hardware: All door hardware is bronze in a variety of designs and patterns.
8. Lighting: All fixtures are electric and original to the house. All switch plates of polished brass are prominently placed.
9. Mechanical equipment: A small elevator, original to the house, runs from the first basement level to the third floor. The octagonal interior is finished with ivory painted panelling framing three mirrors. The cove is decorated with painted green swags. There is a frosted glass skylight. The heating system is still in use. A large water storage tank used to pressurize the system is located in a double room on the west side of the third floor. All plumbing fixtures are original. The white tiled bathrooms on the second floor are furnished with decorated porcelain fixtures. The wash basins have marble or onyx tops. A complete electric central call box made by Hatzel and Buehler of New York City is located in Mrs. Berwind's bathroom.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The mansion is set back from a broad tree lined avenue which is lined with similar estates. The entrance facade faces east, yet the main vista and private facade faces west overlooking a vast, complex arrangement of terraces, gardens, fountains, sculpture and pavilions.
2. Enclosures: The entire central portion of the estate is enclosed with stone and wrought iron boundary wall which is pierced at various intervals by massive wrought iron gates of various designs. The east wall, containing the two entrance gates to the circular gravel drive has stone posts surmounted by flaming urns decorated with ram heads and garlands. Large wrought iron lanterns extend from the interior of the posts. The gates of wrought iron are very ornate, topped with a half rampant lion. A single leaf, wrought iron pedestrian gate is centered in the wrought iron section of this east wall. A gravel walk leads from this gate to the main entrance.

3. Historic landscape design: The second level of the terrace is reached by three sets of stairs of thirteen steps each extending from each of the three portions of the first level. A gravel path extends the full length of the house, to the west of which is a granite retaining wall topped with urns, separating the second level from the third terrace level. Two side stairs of eleven steps each lead to the third level. Another walk, balustrade, and flight of six steps are a bridge from the third level to the vast lawn. Between the balustrades and gravel walks are a variety of lush plantings such as boxwood and arborvitae. Seven nineteenth century French sculpture groups are symmetrically arranged on the terraces. A vast sweep of the lawn dotted with large beech trees is unbroken by paths. The gravel paths run parallel to the north and south boundary walls. Approximately 360 feet west from the lower terrace balustrade is a north-south path running parallel to the west facade of the mansion and extending from a gate on Dixon Street to the courtyard of the carriage house and garage complex. On the west side of this path is a niched hedge fitted with marble busts on high pedestals. Three fountains, one on the extreme southern end of the axis, another centered just to the east of a four step terrace, the last centered in front of the carriage house and garage complex, serve to mark the balustrade and terrace on which are located two teahouses or gazebos. A staircase leads from the north teahouse to the sunken garden to the west. An Italian well head with a frieze of dancing cherubs and a goat is centered in this garden. This landscaping of nearly fourteen acres, including that of non-contiguous properties which Berwind had acquired, was designed by Trumbauer, with assistance from Charles H. Miller and Ernest W. Bowditch and Bruce Butters, the gardener.
4. Outbuildings: The gardens were enlarged in 1902. The two octagonal gazebos were erected at that time. They are built of stone with glazed round headed overdoors capping French doors which are located in each of the four main walls. The semi-domed copper roofs are ringed by a low wrought iron balustrade. Eight stone urns are set at the corners. The carriage house and garage complex is located at the northwest corner of the property. Built in 1911, these matched stone buildings with mansard roofs face each other across an open courtyard. The carriage house on the west had space for ten carriages and stalls for six horses. In addition were harness and storage rooms. The garage to the east contained space for eight automobiles, and repair and laundry rooms. A large decorative arcaded stone gate serves as the entrance to the courtyard.

Prepared by: Antoinette F. Downing
Historian
National Park Service
August, 1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION:

Newport HABS Project — 1969. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor, Jack E. Boucher, photographer.

ADDENDUM TO

THE ELMS

(Edward J. Berwind House)

West side of Belleview Avenue

between Belleview Court & Dixon Street

Newport

Newport County

Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-344

HABS
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